



# PPEC

Pacific Postsecondary Education Council

## Report to ACCJC

Accrediting Commission of  
Community & Junior Colleges

July - December

# 2021



## Geographic Location of Community College Campuses (Satellite Map)



<https://mapsengine.google.com/map/edit?mid=zBxIzykZRzxI.kRQRuvE2OINs>

# **American Samoa Community College**

## **Introduction**

The American Samoa Community College (ASCC) was established in 1970 to provide post-secondary education opportunities in the liberal arts, teacher training, vocational-technical education and general education to the residents of American Samoa. ASCC received its initial accreditation in 1976 and continues to remain accredited under the purview of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC). ASCC offers Associate of Arts, Associate of Science degrees and a Bachelor's in Elementary Education, as well as certificate programs in a variety of academic and technical areas.

## **Accreditation Updates**

ASCC remains accredited by the Accrediting Commission of Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC), a subsidiary of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC).

A team representing the ACCJC conducted a virtual Accreditation visit on September 27-30, 2021. Members of the team conducted pre-arranged interviews with a variety of campus entities including Academics, Student Services, Faculty Senate, Institutional Planning Executive Core Committee, Assessment Committee, Resource Committee, and the Student Government Association. One of the highlights of the virtual review was the ACCJC team holding several forums open to faculty, staff and students. The forums enabled campus stakeholders to communicate directly with members of the ACCJC accrediting team. The College's Accreditation status will be announced following the ACCJC meeting in January 2022.

## **Response to COVID-19 Pandemic**

ASCC continues to comply with the policies set forth by ASG and the federal government during the current pandemic. Federal funding has enabled an approach to instructional services that incorporates an increased use of technology to accommodate social distancing. ASCC continues to utilize Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds (HEERF III) to develop services appropriate during and beyond the pandemic. Between July and December 2021, CRRSAA funding facilitated continued upgrading of the College's technical infrastructure and systems to support and improve Online Learning and vaccination awareness. This included the purchasing of equipment, systems, and professional services to enable technical upgrades, along with supplies necessary for social distancing compliance.

During summer 2021, ASCC initiated a comprehensive program to encourage voluntary vaccination among students who had yet to do so. As of September, 504 students who enrolled in the summer and fall 2021 semesters at ASCC had received their second COVID-19 vaccination, while an additional 83 had received their first shot. Department of Health nurses staffed a vaccination table at ASCC during summer registration, and again during registration for fall.

During fall registration, ASCC provided incentives for students receiving their first or second COVID shots.

Seven Agriculture, Community and Natural Resources (ACNR) staff were part of the Department of Health COVID-19 drive-thru vaccination campaign in September. It was reported that 277 people were vaccinated during the campaign. Also in September, the ACNR Extension Agent based in Ofu, Manu'a, in collaboration with the Forestry staff, promoted the COVID-19 vaccination through resources and displays to the Olosega and Ofu community. About 70-plus people viewed the messages and gained knowledge about the vaccine. As of September 2021, 64% of American Samoa residents had been fully vaccinated.

## **General Updates**

### ***Reclassification***

ASCC remains in discussion with the American Samoa Government (ASG) regarding the challenge of implementing a mandated new pay scale, which sets new salaries for teachers holding AA, BA and PhD degrees. The new pay scale, which raises minimum wages for the ASG workforce, also went into effect for the American Samoa Department of Education earlier this year. ASCC has begun the process of offering a higher education equivalent, which aligns with ASG's mandated pay scale. Meetings were held with both the Governor and Lt. Governor, who indicated the College should move forward with implementing the new wage scale. Assurances were given that the Governor's Office would assist in addressing any budgetary shortfalls for the reclassification. The situation was also explained to the Fono (Legislature of American Samoa) Joint Budget Committee in August, but as of October 2021 a means of implementing the new pay scale at ASCC is still being sought.

### ***Board of Higher Education***

In September, the Fono (Legislature of American Samoa) confirmed the new members of the Board of Higher Education, who have been chosen by the Governor to oversee the American Samoa Community College. The members are Rev Elder Dr Siulagi Solomona (re-appointed) Rev Elder Fouvale Asiata, Rev Iasepi Ulu, Dr Gertrude Iuli Sala, Ms Denise Ah Sue, and Justin Tuiasosopo. The House Education Committee held a confirmation hearing at which the new Board was approved.

### ***Enrollment Increase***

During Summer 2021, ASCC felt a special sense of encouragement when enrollment increased by 108% in comparison to Summer 2020. The increase may have been related to Pandemic conditions, which made travel off-island inaccessible to many, but not being able to reach Hawaii and the US mainland gave many of our Territory's young people a reason to take advantage of the higher education opportunities offered by ASCC. This trend has continued into the Fall semester with increased enrollment of both part time and full time students. The

dramatic increase in enrollment serves to remind ASCC of its potential to affect change for the better through student centeredness and the pursuit of the goals stated in the College's mission.

## **The College of the Marshall Islands (CMI)**

### ***Mission***

*The College of the Marshall Islands will provide our community with access to quality, higher and further educational services, prioritize student success through engagement in relevant Academic, Career and Technical Education, and be a center for the study of Marshallese Culture. It will also provide intellectual resources and facilitate research specific to the needs of the nation. (Revision approved December 1, 2020)*

### ***Introduction***

The College provided educational services to 737 students during the Summer session 2021 and 1267 (852 FTE) students in the Fall semester, which represents a 9% increase from the Fall 2020 enrollment. Total enrollment for 2021 is 3173 or 2265 FTE. The average age of students registered in Fall was 23 years. Of those, there were 51% full-time and 49% part-time students, and 98% were Marshallese citizens. The number of first time students increased modestly from 319 in Fall 2020, to 141 in Spring 2021 to 329 in the Fall with an average age of 19.63 years old. This compared to 19.85 years in Spring 2021. Notable was an increase in female students to 54% (compared to the prior ten-year average of 50%). The following report covers the period from July – mid-November 2021.

### ***General Accreditation Updates***

At its June meeting, ACCJC renewed CMI's accreditation for 18 months. A follow-up report is due October 1, 2022 and will be followed by a visit. To prepare for this and future reports, the Accreditation Steering Committee is tracking CMI's progress against the two college requirements (both under Standard III), team recommendations for improvement, and improvement plans for the ISER using the college's project management application, Asana. An update on the college's progress will be shared with the full campus community at a November 26th retreat. Review of accreditation standards for continuous improvement has been integrated into college participatory governance committee meetings and the program review cycle.

### ***Governance***

#### ***General Highlights***

The third quarter Board meeting, held on August 31, approved and adopted the CMI Code of Ethics. Two new members of the CMI Board of Regents were appointed by Cabinet in July, 2021. An orientation for the Board was facilitated by Dr. David Newnham October 13-14, together with an additional session on October 27.

During this reporting period, the College completed the revision of its Finance Policies and Procedures and a medium term plan (termed *Wapepe*) for Finance is currently under



development. A series of SWOT analyses by CMI staff and the Board of Regents identified areas for focus and strategic initiatives. The Finance Waapepe will be reviewed for approval by the Board of Regents in December.

Student persistence and retention remains a CMI priority focus: 46% of students were retained from Spring to Fall 2021. This compares to the past ten-year average Spring-to-Fall retention rate of 26%, and it remains anticipated that CMI will meet the 63% retention goal for Fall 2021 to Fall 2022. In October, CMI signed an agreement with APIA forming a Campus Inquiry Team (CIT) to explore the reasons why female students had a 44% probability of persisting to a second year of college, compared to a 58% probability for males. As an additional strategy to help CMI students build, deepen and sustain the social connections critical for retention, the College signed an agreement in November to adopt *Nod*, a research-backed app designed to help students build social resilience through prompts and interactive tools rooted in cognitive behavioral health. In addition, the second cohort of CMI Champion Navigators—students who have persisted following their second year of studies and have the potential to graduate at the end of their third year—has had their kickoff event and are participating in a variety of advising and career-oriented events.

In early November, CMI finalized a contract with the Public School System as a participant in the RMI Teacher Retention Project and will lead the revision of the program and courses in the Certificate of Completion in Special Education, and provide appropriate advising and professional development opportunities in the area of special education.

The first community ‘sensitization’ workshop to introduce the purpose, intended outcomes and courses proposed for the new AS – *Agroforestry Education for Health and Sustainable Livelihoods* currently under development through a NIFA Distance Education grant was held on November 15, 2021.

In other accreditation related activities, in September, CMI President and VPASA jointly presented on the CMI’s efforts to ensure Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, VPASA Dr. Elizabeth Switaj appointed as member of one of the Standards Review Peer Writing Teams, commencing summer 2021, Director IR, Ms. Cheryl Vila, appointed member of Peer Review Team – American Samoa CC and the CMI President accepted an invitation to serve as Vice Chair for the 2022 Formative-Summative Review of Palau Community College.

During the current reporting period, a process to upload all records and archives into eFile Cabinet commenced. Financial Management systems are entirely web-based and migrated to the Cloud, and regular training has continued to ensure all sections of the College are well familiar with Jenzabar, CMI’s new Student Information System, prior to its roll-out mid-2022.

The major impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the College of the Marshall Islands has been with respect to hiring faculty from overseas. Three instructors have been admitted through quarantine during this reporting period. Twelve faculty, staff and their dependents will arrive on a special flight from Fiji in December (including 4 from Eastern Europe), and two are expected in December transiting via Honolulu.

The current Travel Advisory, #32 has extended the travel ban on incoming passengers until 30 November, 2021. The College remains well-placed to continue classes in the modes required with CMI continues to serve as a vaccination center for both students and the Uliga community as well as for staff and faculty of the college. All students wishing to be accommodated in college residence will be required to have proof of vaccination unless medically exempted. New college ID's indicate vaccination status. At November 2, the following status of CMI vaccinations were:

	Nov 2, 2021	%
Total staff/faculty fully vaccinated N=208	168	81%
Total CMI students fully vaccinated N=1267	895	71%
Uliga ABE students fully vaccinated N=223	125	56%

CMI continued monthly publications of its newsletter *Jilel* with editions from May - October online at <https://cmi.edu/?s=Jilel>

## College of Micronesia-FSM

### *Introduction*

The College of Micronesia-FSM Mission Statement reads, “*The College of Micronesia-FSM is a learner-centered institution of higher education that is committed to the success of the Federated States of Micronesia by providing academic and career and technical educational programs characterized by continuous improvement and best practices.*”

The College of Micronesia-FSM (COM-FSM) is a multi-campus institution with the National Campus located in Palikir, Pohnpei, and a state campus in each state. COM-FSM also includes the FSM Fisheries and Maritime Institute located in Yap. The area most directly served by the college is the Federated States of Micronesia, which includes approximately two-million square miles of the western Pacific Ocean and a population of over 110,000. The college offers 1 baccalaureate degree, 14 associate degrees, and 17 certificate programs. The college offers fisheries and maritime instruction for fishing, navigation and engineering that meet the Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW) regulations and traditional navigation.

### *Accreditation Updates*

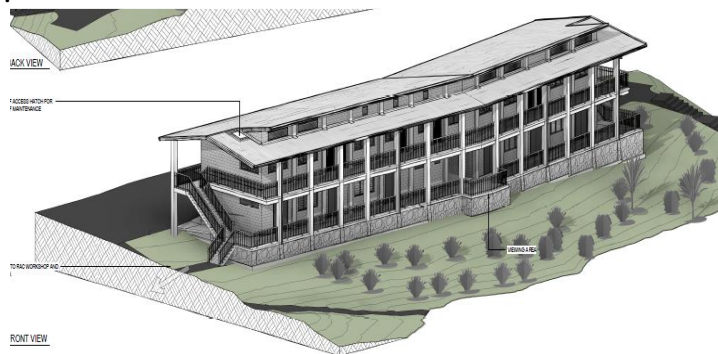


Institutional Self-Evaluation Report preparation is on schedule with drafts of analysis and evaluation of the Standards under review by college standing committees. The next phase will involve editing of the report and endorsement by the Executive Committee and the Board of Regents. The college held a collegewide summit August 4, 2021 with 327 participants. The purpose was to

determine the direction for projects in the Quality Focus Essay. A second ISER preparation workshop provided by the ACCJC liaison Catherine Webb was held November 4, 2021. “Welewel” is a traditional navigation term meaning to stay on a straight and honest path.

### *General Updates*

- Construction of a multi-purpose technical education building at the Career and Technical Education Center in Pohnpei began September 1, 2021 with a completion date scheduled for August 2023.



- The HTM building renovation at the Career and Technical Education Center is near completion. The old teaching facility was enlarged to accommodate 7 cooking/teaching stations, prep area, pastry area, baking area, pantry and dishwashing area for the “Blue Plate Café”. The Blue Plate Café is a student run restaurant located on the campus.
- The National Government issued a national mandate for COVID-19 vaccinations requiring all government employees and organizations receiving federal funds to be vaccinated or go on leave without pay. The college had only a few employees choosing not to be vaccinated. HEERF funding is being used to promote vaccinations among students at each campus. The college continues to promote social distancing, temperature screening and personal hygiene on all campuses. FSM remains COVID-19 free and borders are open only for those who are vaccinated, have negative COVID-19 tests, quarantine in Guam for 10 days and quarantine in Pohnpei or other FSM state for 10 days with a negative COVID-19 test before release.
- The Center for Entrepreneurship completed installation of its farm’s solar energy system, which is funded by the Australian Embassy’s Direct Aid Program (DAP). The \$15,000 purchased one solar system including 4 solar street lights and 10 solar fans. The system will run the hydroponic pumps and all other equipment for the farm’s operation of a 50’ x 50’ greenhouse from a US Economic Development Administration grant and the 40’ x 70’ greenhouse from the Australian Embassy. These two new greenhouses will increase production from 1,200 to 2,500 crops or up to 6,000 pounds of fresh vegetables every month. All produce is used in the college dining hall to prepare healthy meals for students.
- The college provided \$935,157 in emergency financial aid programs for students through HEERF funding. The first program, “WeCare program,” assisted students with past balances incurred since March 2020. The students encountered difficulties due to moving to distance learning which was new for all our students. Students were given financial assistance so they could enroll fall 2021 when the college began having in person classes again and students were encouraged to seek tutoring and counseling. The second program called “WeCare laptop program” provided 561 eligible students with laptops so they



could have a device for accessing course materials in online classes. Other initiatives include extending wifi access to remote parts of the islands.

## **Guam Community College**

### ***Introduction***

Since its inception through the Community College Act of 1977 (as amended by Public Law 31-99 in 2011), Guam Community College continues to fulfill its mission to be a leader in career and technical workforce development, providing the highest quality, student-centered education and job training for Micronesia. GCC serves as Guam's State Agency for Career and Technical Education under the United States Vocational Education Act of 1946 (and subsequent amendments). As a multi-faceted, public, career and technical education institution, the College currently offers 26 associate degrees and 18 certificates. GCC delivers postsecondary education on campus in fall and spring semesters and during summer. Off-site, the College primarily delivers secondary career technical education at six Guam public high schools, as well as short-term, specialized training at local businesses. Additionally, GCC offers adult education programs and services, namely English as a Second Language, Adult Basic Education, High School Equivalency preparation and testing, and Adult High School Diploma.

### ***General Updates***

Enrollment for the fall 2021 semester was 1690, a 1% drop from the prior year fall 2020 semester. Enrollment strategies remain a top priority for the College. A winter session is being offered during December consisting of courses in Math and English to help students progress towards their degree completion. The bootcamps or pre-apprenticeship programs continue to be offered as an intensive program and a great alternative to semester long courses.

The College remains vigilant and steadfast in its efforts to ensure students' needs are met during this pandemic and every avenue exhausted to provide the education and support necessary to achieve our educational mission.

The Center for Student Involvement continued to host student activities in a virtual environment. The New Student Orientation was held virtually with 252 participants in August of this reporting period. The Meet the President sessions were delivered virtually with 129 attendees for the first session and 130 attendees for the second session. The Need to Lead student conference was held virtually with 67 attendees in October.

The Fall College Assembly was held virtually with campus updates provided by the College President and Vice President for Academic Affairs. The faculty, administrators, and staff in attendance were provided informational sessions on pandemic-related care, demonstrations and updates on the progress the College has made with the Institutional Strategic Master Plan. An assessment of the assembly was completed by attendees and the results will be used in planning and preparing for the next College Assembly.

In place of the annual Thanksgiving lunch, the GCC Board of Trustees provided Thanksgiving lunch plates for all GCC employees.

### ***Accreditation Updates***

The College President and the team assistant served on an Accreditation Peer Review team which was a virtual visit using the Zoom online meeting platform. There were many great takeaways from the virtual site visit that the College will use as we plan for our next comprehensive site review visit.

## **Palau Community College**

### ***Accreditation Updates***

Palau Community College became an accredited institution in 1977 by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior College, Western Association of Schools and Colleges (ACCJC-WASC). It has been an ACCJC-WASC member institution for 44 years.

The College Accreditation Steering Committee (ASC) is drafting and gathering evidence for the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER) 2023 that will be submitted to the Commission no later than August 1, 2022. The College will have its site visit in the spring of 2023. The College ASC had a mini training with ACCJC Vice President Gohar Momjian re – Institutional Self-Evaluation write-up in September 2021. The mini-training was attended by all members of the College ASC including the College ALO and the President. Palau Community College ALO will be submitting the College ISER 2023 to the College President in May 2022 for review and approval. The College President will be submitting the College ISER 2023 to the College Board of Trustees for review and approval in June 2022. The College Accreditation office will package and mail out the ISER 2023 to ACCJC Novato, California address in July 2022 via the Palau DHL mail service to ensure that the College ISER 2023 is received by the Commission no later than August 1, 2022.

### ***College Program Highlights***

- Tourism & Hospitality Program Student Internship Symposium held in July 2021 at the Palau Tourism & Hospitality School of Excellence. The Symposium featured the Island Dream Resort grand opening presentation from the nine (9) Tourism & Hospitality internship students. Students were not able to conduct their internship academic requirements at local hotels in town because of the global pandemic affecting the local tourism businesses. The symposium was attended by the College President, administrators and staff, including special guests: President, Palau Chamber of Commerce and President of Belau Tourism Association. The Island Dream Resort presentation showcases Front Office Operation, House Keeping Operation, Kitchen and Restaurant Dining, Sports and Leisure amenities. Attendees were given the experience of a fine dining relishing to a three-course meal.

- On August 13, 2021 Palau Community College held its 7th Annual Convocation at the college cafeteria. PCC President Dr. Tellei launched the meeting with welcoming remarks and initiatives set forth in rest of the year. Special remarks and presentations from Vice President of Administration & Finance, Vice President of Cooperative & Research Extension, Dean of Academic Affairs, Dean of Students, Acting Dean of Continuing Education and Director of Human Resource provide needed information for faculty and staff. As special recognition by the Dean of Academic Affairs were given to all faculty members for their hard work and commitment in helping students to succeed in their academic and social life.
- PCC Continuing Education conducted series of trainings in computer applications, office skill management, caregiver, and customer service to local government workforce and community members from July to September of this year.
- The Associated Students of Palau Community College (ASPCC) and Student Trustee general election was held in September followed by the induction ceremony and swearing-in ceremony to officiate elected members of ASPCC. PCC President Dr. Tellei and Chairman of the Board of Trustees Billy G. Kuartei gave Oath of Office followed by special remarks from ASPCC President and Student Trustee.
- A PCC Environmental/Marine Science student, Mr. Adrian Ililau was selected by the National Science Foundation (NSF) Louis Stokes Alliances for Minority Participation (LSAMP) for his research project at Palau International Coral Reef Center (PICRC) in Spring 2021 titled “Effects of Heat Stress on Coral Bleaching” focusing on the major marine reef site in Palau to present virtually in the Louis Stokes Midwest Regional Center of Excellence (LSMRCE) Annual Conference on October 22-24, 2021.
- Environmental/Marine Science (ES) Program – student, Macy Nagata traveled on October 31st to November 12th to Glasgow, Scotland (UK) to participate in the COP26 Summit. Her travel and participation were supported by Palau Ebiil Society. COP stands for Conference of the Parties. Parties are the signatories of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) - a treaty agreed in 1994 which has 197 Parties (196 countries and the EU), which Palau is part of. The 2021 conference, hosted by the UK, together with partners Italy, in Glasgow, was the 26th meeting of the Parties, which is why it's called COP26.
- In October 2021, PCC President Dr. Patrick U. Tellei, Palau Ministry of Education (MOE) Dr. Dale Jenkins, and University of Guam School of Education signed a partnership agreement to provide teacher preparation program for Palau’s elementary school teachers by enrolling in the bachelor of arts in education with specialization in special education. The program consists of twenty-five (25) elementary school teachers, MOE Special Education Coordinator, Course facilitator, and UOG-SOE program instructor.
- In Summer 2021, PCC STEM student, Ms. Kebang Ngiraklang in the Supporting Emerging Aquatic Scientists (SEAS) Islands Alliance Project sponsored by National Science Foundation (NSF) to support island students to broaden participation in the

environmental and ocean sciences with partnership institution, University of Guam. Ms. Ngiraklang research collection of mud samples in the remote are of Ngiwal State in Palau were analyzed using Light Microscope (LM) and Scanning Electron Microscope (SEM). Professor Chris Lobban mentored Ms. Ngiraklang on her work throughout the project. Based on her work, a new species of diatom was discovered. Professor Lobban described the sample as unusual as they could get a good external and internal view of the new SEM with distinguished features such as curved ribs and pinched-in conopea. Ms. Ngiraklang was requested to named the new species, *Nitschia ngiwalensis* after the place of origin, Ngiwal State.